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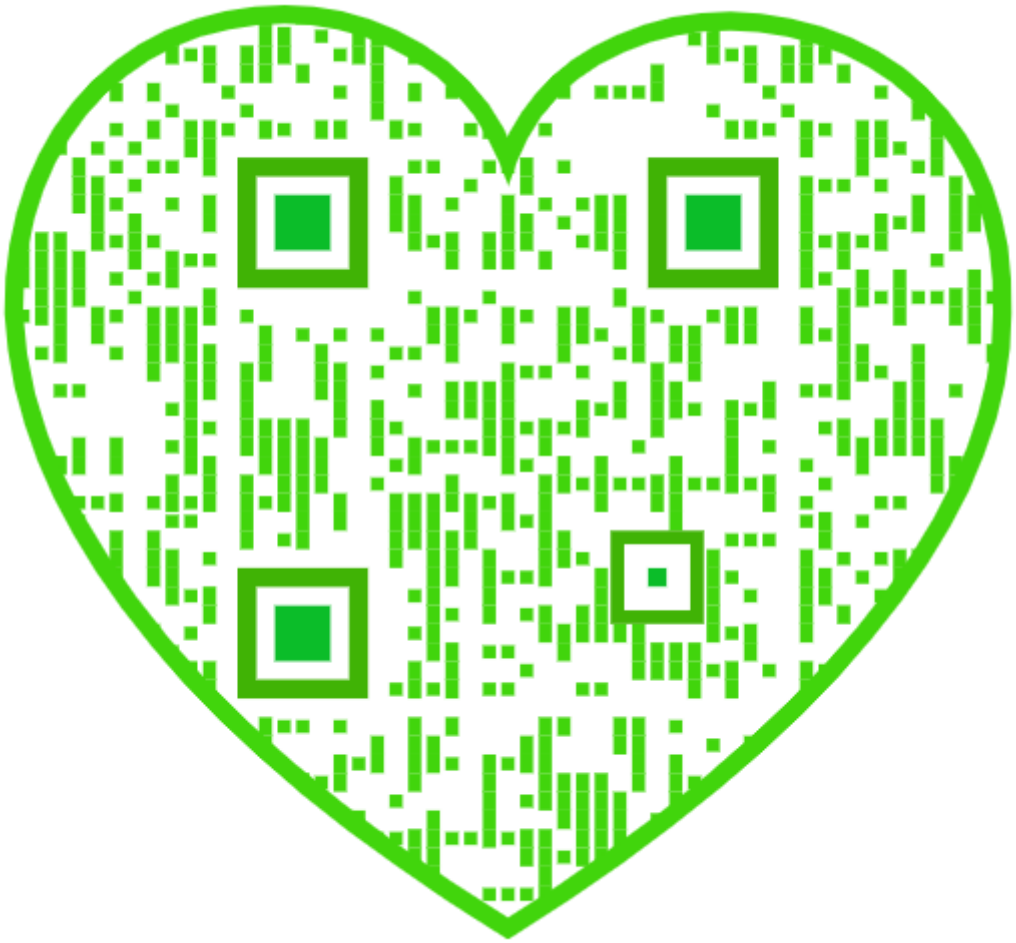
LOUISIANA BEEF CATTLE



LOUISIANA BEEF CATTLE

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FOREWORD

The following remarks relative to Louisiana Beef Cattle are proffered the public to show the marvelous advantages possessed by the alluvial lands of Louisiana, for the growing of cattle.

An intelligent use of these advantages will bring wealth to the individual, the State and the Nation.

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THE wealth-producing possibilities of cattle-raising are written into the history, literature and art of every race; and with every nationality riches have always been counted in cattle and corn.

We find cattle mentioned in the earliest known records of the Hebrews, Chaldeans and Hindus, and carved on the monuments of Egypt, thousands of years before the Christian era.

Among the primitive peoples wealth was, and still is, measured by the size of the cattle herds, whether it be the reindeer of the frigid North, the camel of the Great Sahara, or herds of whatsoever kind that are found in every land and in every clime.

The earliest known money, in Ancient Greece, was the image of the ox stamped on metal; and the Latin word *pecunia* and our own English "pecuniary" are derived from *pecus*—cattle.

Although known to the Eastern Hemisphere since the dawn of history, cattle are not native to the Western Hemisphere, but were introduced into America during the sixteenth century.

Cortez, Ponce de Leon, De Soto and the other *conquistadores* from Old Madrid, who sailed the seas in quest of gold, brought with them to the New World the monarchs of the bull ring, and introduced the national sport of Spain into the colonies founded in Peru, Mexico, Florida and Louisiana.

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The long-horned, half-wild herds encountered by the pioneers, and by the "Forty-niners," who three centuries later trekked across the continent in quest of gold in California, were descendants of the bull pens of Mexico City, St. Augustine and New Orleans.

A different type of cattle was brought over to Jamestown, the first English colony, in the seventeenth century; these were strictly utilitarian, designed for the triple service of enriching the larder with dairy products, supplementing the abundant meat supply of buffalo, deer and other game and providing the ox as the draft animal.

The pioneers, striking out from the Atlantic seaboard, carried with them their domestic cattle, which were introduced and fostered wherever settlements were made in their progress across the continent.

It was not until after the Revolutionary War that wealthy planters of Virginia imported Herefords from England, Jerseys from the Isle of Jersey, and the flower of other Old World herds.

Even then, extensive breeding of high-grade animals languished for years, owing to the unprogressive farming methods; and at a later period on account of the dominancy of the Western cattle ranges.

The public domain of the West and Southwest, owing to the vast areas of grazing land which cost the cattlemen nothing, became the controlling factor in the American cattle industry, reaching its climax about 1880.

Subsequently these great feeding grounds were invaded by the sheep-grower, whose flocks destroyed the pastures and drove out the cattle wherever they appeared.

The death knell of the national cattle range was sounded by the United States Government in throwing open the public lands to settlers.

During the romantic period of the cattle outfit—the

cowboy with his bucking broncho, lariat and six-shooter—many of the important cities and towns of today came into existence as humble adjuncts of the live stock industry.

There are men living today who have witnessed the beginning, the rise, and almost the extinction, of the Western cattle range.

A complete revolution has been brought about in the cattle industry within a lifetime. The change has been a rapid one from the free range to the fenced pasture; the open ranges turned into farms and settlements.

With the advent of changed conditions, the rancher of restricted territory and reduced herds ceased to be an important factor in directly supplying the market, as he was forced to utilize the land that was not desirable for homesteaders, and the pasturage being insufficient to suitably fatten stock, he was compelled to ship his cattle to the feeders of the Middle West to prepare them for market.

Meanwhile, the Middle West, or corn-belt states, being unable to raise cattle in an economical way, developed into a feeding station, where young cattle from the Western ranges were shipped to be fattened and prepared for the market.

With the decrease of range cattle, year by year, fewer Western beeves reach the corn belt to be finished and made ready for market.

The early settlers of Southern Louisiana raised cattle after the fashion that prevailed on the plains of Texas; that is, great herds without care or attention of any kind increased and multiplied and were annually rounded up and marketed; the returns were virtually all profit, as the cattle found their sustenance entirely in the luxuriant natural pasturage.

With the change of conditions in the cattle-growing world, Louisiana began the improvement of its herds,

so that today there are thousands of highly bred cattle in the state, equal to the best that can be found anywhere.

In a consideration of any branch of the live stock industry, a review of the world-wide conditions becomes necessary to establish a standard of comparison between the industry in a given locality as against all other localities, and such a review at the present time shows an international shortage of beef cattle that even threatens famine.

The day of nondescript cattle of inferior quality is rapidly passing. Through breeding, they are being steadily supplanted by higher grade, perfectly developed animals which yield the proper proportions of lean and fat, whose meat is tender, nutritious and palatable.

The Old World breeds have been improved and perfected, through the skill of the American grower, until American stock has become the standard of the whole world, from the standpoint of excellence in every particular.

There are a multitude of reasons why it will never be possible for the growers of the Eastern Hemisphere, with the exception of Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries, to successfully compete with the United States in bringing the standard of their beef cattle up to the high point already attained in this country.

No longer ago than ten years, cattle were not acceptable as collateral except by banks in the Western cattle centers.

Today, cattle are standard collateral for loans, approved by the Treasury of the United States Government and acceptable everywhere, as cattle are as good as gold all over the world; and a cattle enterprise managed with ability and integrity is the safest business known.

There are diseases to which cattle are subject; but these, like the diseases to which mankind is subject, are now controlled by science, and can be quickly eradicated, even though a foothold is once gained; and that a foothold should be gained at all is as much beyond the bounds of reason as that the cities of New York and Chicago should, in this advanced age, be devastated by a scourge of cholera, smallpox, yellow fever, or what not.

According to official estimates of the United States Government, in 1910 there were 41,178,000 head of beef cattle in the United States, having a value of $785,261,000, while on January 1, 1917, there were 40,849,000 head of beef cattle, having a value of $1,465,786,000; a decrease in supply, but an increase in value, within seven years, of 86.66 per cent

In addition to superior natural conditions, the United States, on account of the great distance to other countries where cattle can be raised successfully, is protected against competition, at all times and under all conditions.

The United States for a quarter of a century was the world's greatest export nation, and this trade has fallen off only in recent times, because of the shortage at home.

Our export business well illustrates the changing conditions in the cattle industry, and the record of live cattle exported from Chicago is a notable example, namely:

	Cattle
Exports in 1905	321,301
Exports in 1912	23,006
Exports in 1913	260
Exports in 1914	182

This table shows that the export trade was virtually extinct a year before the European War began; and if

revived, it will be because of exorbitant prices brought about by the abnormal European demand, due to the depletion of the cattle herds abroad.

Official statistics show that prior to the European War 90.55 per cent of all the European cattle were within the boundaries of the now-belligerent countries.

The records at that time, covering both beef cattle and dairy-herds, were as follows:

Russia	36,237,000
Germany	20,944,000
Austria-Hungary	17,787,883
France	12,286,849
United Kingdom	12,030,789
Turkey	6,726,000
Italy	6,198,861
Rumania	2,667,000
Belgium	1,831,000

Even prior to the war, the world-supply of cattle was diminishing, and now the herds of these nations, representing nine-tenths of the European supply, are depleted as never before, while the one-tenth remaining supply of the neighboring neutral nations is reduced by the drafts of the warring powers.

The immense demand in recent years has caused the marketing of vast numbers of the best improved cattle in the United States, including great inroads upon the breeding herds, as cattle growers have marketed their stock without regard to the future, looking solely to the large immediate profits.

The depletion and deterioration of the breeding herds is a source of great danger, as it cannot fail to result in a still further decrease in production, and threatens to seriously impair the meat supply of the American people.

As an infinitely worse condition prevails in the other cattle-producing countries of the world, it is

obvious that we cannot look to any outside source of supply, either to replenish our herds, or to provide our meat food requirements.

The increased cost of production in the North has resulted in the great advancement of the dairying industry, to meet the American food requirements.

In 1850 the milch cows on American farms numbered about 6,000,000. This number was increased to 8,500,000 in 1860, and to about 13,000,000 in 1880; and the census of 1900 showed 17,100,000. In 1907, they numbered 20,625,000, and January 1, 1917, 22,768,000, or more than one-third of our entire cattle herds.

The change from beef-cattle raising to dairying is most noticeable in the Eastern and the North Central States, where the lack of pasturage and the increased cost of forage make the production of beef less profitable than formerly, while the proximity to large centers of population and great cities has greatly stimulated the demand for dairy products.

In some sections of the country dairying has encroached to such an extent on the beef cattle industry that the latter has ceased to be a factor of importance in those localities.

The beef cattle industry of the North is divided into two departments: first, producing in the Far West; second, preparing for market in the Middle West.

The Western producer can only provide grazing, and must then ship to the Middle West feeder, who raises the corn with which he prepares the cattle for market.

The shortness of the grazing season makes it impossible to put a thousand-pound beef on the market in a year; consequently the stock must be shipped to the Middle West in September, October or November, to be fattened and prepared for the market.

The breeding herds and the stock not ready for shipment to the feeders of the Middle West exist on

the thin grasses, through eight months- from September to June.

These sections of arid soil and thin vegetation are further handicapped by the winters of intense cold, and of enforced housing and feeding; for, during six or seven months, and even eight months, of each year, there is scant vegetation to support animal life, and the struggle is a severe one to sustain life itself against the encroachments of the bitter temperature which so long prevails.

If the Middle West farmer should go into cattle-raising, his position would be almost identical with that of the cattle grower of the Far West, as his pasturage would be exhausted in October, and it would be necessary to feed the cattle until May; otherwise, his loss would be tremendous through partial starvation and exposure to inclement weather, and he could not count upon the survival of more than 75 per cent of his herd from one pasturing season to the next.

The farmer of the Middle West has six months of open weather, which must be devoted exclusively to planting, cultivating and harvesting his corn crop, and this crop takes up his land, leaving no acreage available for summer pasturage.

He produces corn in the summer, and begins feeding in the fall. According to the quality of cattle received from the Far West, he feeds 60, 90, and up to 120 days, when they are ready for market, and, according to the old saying, are "corn sold on the hoof."

Even the adoption of intensive methods does not enable the Northern grower to successfully compete with the Southern grower, because production in the North is limited to one-half the year, and the other half is wholly unproductive, during which period his stores are being consumed, without any returns whatever.

To house cattle during the winter is scarcely better than to leave them exposed to the rigors of climate, as confinement brings the scourge of tuberculosis; whereas in the South, and wherever life is spent in the open, cattle enjoy immunity from this plague.

Furthermore, the year-round supply of green food in the South is naturally conducive to the health and well-being of all animals, whereas in the North, for several months in the year, only concentrated food is available.

"The South, with her short, mild winters, and her abundance of grasses, can grow young cattle cheaper than the North."—W. J. Spillman, Chief of the Bureau of Farm Management, United States Department of Agriculture.

A mild climate, luxuriant pastures, a great variety of forage crops, a year-round supply of green food, and living outdoors all the year, are the factors that make Southern Louisiana the ideal cattle-raising section of the United States.

James Wilson, former Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, at the National Live Stock Show held in New Orleans in 1916, said:

"You have as fine domestic animals in the State of Louisiana today as you will find anywhere; the finest breeds of cattle—Holstein and others, as well as American breeds of Herefords, which are an improvement over the English Hereford."

In the corn belt the lands are not so productive in grains and pasture crops as the alluvial lands of Louisiana.

In the North the growing season for crops does not exceed six months; in Louisiana the productive period is twelve months.

In Northern states, animals can be pastured in the fields during six or seven months only; in Louisiana the animals may pasture in the open the whole year.

In the North, extensive and costly barns and equipment are essential for winter shelter and feeding, and vast quantities of grain, hay, ensilage, and other foods, must be raised and stored, as the period of winter-feeding extends over six months; in Louisiana, open sheds facing south provide all the shelter needed, as aside from cold rains at intervals during February or March, there are no rigors of climate.

Careful estimates by farm experts, and by authorities on cattle, place the cost of production in Louisiana at less than 60 per cent of the cost in the most favored corn-belt states.

There is no winter here, as understood in the North. Frost is a rarity, frequently being absent for several years, and is never severe; the rainfall is well distributed and averages 60 inches a year; extremes of temperature are very rare; the average for January is 59 degrees, and for July, 82 degrees, over the Gulf Coast area of Southern Louisiana; and vegetation flourishes the year round.

The cost of summer feeding in Southern Louisiana, as compared with summer feeding in the corn-belt states, shows a difference of about 25 per cent in favor of the former.

In winter feeding, the difference is altogether in favor of Louisiana. Furthermore, practically none of the food consumed here is required to keep up the animal heat, whereas 30 per cent of the food given Northern cattle during the winter is absorbed by this requirement alone.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, the cost of ensilage in the Northern states ranges from $1.50 to $4 per ton, and it is generally conceded that corn ensilage in the Middle West costs an average of $2.50 per ton.

On the alluvial lands of Southern Louisiana it has been proved that ensilage can be produced at 50 cents

to $1.50 per ton, and the yield per acre is two crops of ten to twenty tons each, as against one crop of five to ten tons in the North.

According to the Bureau of Plant Industry, the best bluegrass pastures of the North will carry only one head of cattle to two acres for about six months of the year; whereas on the alluvial lands of Louisiana, Bermuda grass and lespedeza combined forms permanent pasture which will carry several head of cattle ten months on a single acre.

With a network of waterways and railroads, nearer the great consuming markets of the East than any other important cattle-growing section, and but a short distance from Chicago and the important markets of the Middle States, Southern Louisiana occupies a strategic commercial position of great money-value to those who raise cattle, as well as other products.

Out of six thousand members of the American Hereford Society, a grower from the Gulf Coast took the greatest number of prizes for a herd of Hereford cattle, and also took the grand championship prize for a Hereford bull, against the whole of the United States, which shows the merit of this section of country.

The market today requires quality, and experience has proved that the greatest profit comes through producing quality.

The day of the inferior, lightweight animal, which was marketed at two to three and one-half years old, has passed.

The requirement now is for high-grade, one-year-old stock, weighing an average of 1,000 pounds.

This stock can be produced in Louisiana under organized methods, at a cost of 4½ cents per pound, delivered at the market, and will bring a price of 10 cents per pound.

Prior to the Civil War the best talent in America was devoted to agricultural pursuits, which offered the greatest opportunity for making large wealth—as wealth was counted in those days.

Afterward came the manufacturing era, which attracted the genius of the country and brought about the perfection of methods and combinations in almost every known line, with the result that no longer is there any general field of opportunity therein.

Another era has now arrived, which again focuses the minds of thinking men upon the greatest of all problems—supplying the human race with food—because of the imperative need of increasing the world's food supply, and because of the large profit therein.

In the United States today, the production of live stock is the greatest field of opportunity open to men of brains and capital; and it is, above all, the one industry that now attracts the genius of men of large affairs, and the great aggregations of capital.

In 1895 the average price of beef cattle in the principal markets of this country was $4.40 per hundredweight; in 1900, it had increased to $5.80; in 1907 the average was $7.60; in 1910, $8.85; in 1911, $9.35; in 1912, $10.25; in 1915, $11.60; and in 1916, about $11.90 per hundredweight.

The foregoing market prices tell the story of the cattle industry from a financial standpoint.

The following prices paid in 1901 and in 1916 for prize-winning exhibition beeves—at the International Live Stock Exposition held annually in Chicago, at the Union Stock Yards—well illustrate the trend of the cattle market:

In 1901, the Grand Champion carload of fat cattle was two-year-old stock, weighing an average of 1,497 pounds, and sold in the auction ring at $12 per hundredweight.

In 1916, the Grand Champion carload of fat cattle was one-year-old stock, weighing an average of 1,146 pounds, and sold in the auction ring at $28 per hundredweight.

In 1901, the Grand Champion Steer was two years old, weighed 1,600 pounds, and sold in the auction ring at 50 cents per pound.

In 1916, the Grand Champion Steer was one year old, weighed 1,120 pounds, and sold in the auction ring at $1.75 per pound.

The following top prices were paid in the auction ring of the Exposition for "show cattle" of various weights:

Cattle Weighing	Price in	Per Hundredweight
900 to 1050 pounds	1901	$ 8.70
900 to 1050 pounds	1916	17.75
1050 to 1200 pounds	1901	9.50
1050 to 1200 pounds	1916	28.00
1200 to 1350 pounds	1901	8.75
1200 to 1350 pounds	1916	20.00
1350 to 1500 pounds	1901	12.00
1350 to 1500 pounds	1916	18.50
1500 to 1900 pounds	1901	9.30
1500 to 1900 pounds	1916	15.75

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